



MEDIA STATEMENT

15 December 2021

Closing the Gap Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme scripts deadline 31 January 2022
As of 31 January 2022, Closing the Gap (CTG) PBS scripts will not be available for people who aren't registered correctly with Services Australia.

There are recent changes to the Closing the Gap (CTG) program which aim to make it easier for eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to access medicines. Patients from any geographical location only need to be registered for the program once in their lifetime, to get free or reduced cost PBS medicines from any community pharmacy in Australia, without the need for each script to be marked 'CTG'.

As of 1 July 2021, there is a new national registration system run by Services Australia for the CTG PBS Co-payment program. This system is called Health Professional Online Services (HPOS). Unfortunately, not all patients who previously received CTG scripts were transferred to the new database on HPOS, resulting in some people paying more for medicines. Potentially thousands of people who have previously had CTG scripts may be affected.

In response to this issue, the Australian Government allowed all people who had previously received CTG scripts but are not currently registered for CTG on HPOS, to continue to access CTG-subsidised medicines **until 31 January 2022**.

NACCHO is urging all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to talk with their health service, GP and/or pharmacy to check if they are correctly registered for the program through the new HPOS system. If this is not resolved as of February 2022, then the cost of that person's medicines will increase.

Health service providers, including Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) and GPs, may want to communicate directly with their local pharmacies to see if they have received PBS warnings on their dispensing systems (*warning code 810*). Pharmacists can check if patients are registered, but only PBS prescribers or Ahpra registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners can register patients via the Services Australia HPOS, through the 'PRODA' portal.

NACCHO Chair, Donnella Mills said, "Maintaining and improving access to essential Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) medicines remains a priority for NACCHO and our members, research shows that when access is improved the health benefits are clear. Improving access to evidenced-based PBS medicines is one important way to improve health equity between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians."

For more information, NACCHO maintains a [webpage](#) on the CTG reforms and will run workshops in January 2022 for those services wishing to know more about the measure, system and upcoming 31 January 2022 deadline.

For background info on Change to PBS Closing the Gap program [read here](#).



NACCHO

National Aboriginal Community
Controlled Health Organisation

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NACCHO is the national peak body representing 144 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) across the Country on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing issues. NACCHO is the third largest employer of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia, with over 3,500 out of the 6,000 staff working in ACCHOs being either of Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander background. Many ACCHOs have almost 50 years of experience in the delivery of comprehensive primary health care. Services are delivered through fixed, outreach and mobile clinics operating in urban, rural and remote settings across Australia.